ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A15

THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
15 May 1981

CORD MEYER

Casey Picks Amateur for Most Sensitive CIA Job

In some of its choices for senior positions in its foreign policy establishment, the ways of the Reagan administration are wondrous to behold. Just as State Department officers were beginning to recover from the appointment of a Reagan confidant without any foreign experience as deputy secretary of state, the CIA was stunned this week by the selection of a rank amateur to head its most sensitive directorate.

Reaching outside the professional cadre of trained and experienced intelligence officers, CIA Director William Casey has rejected the unanimous advice of old intelligence hands by appointing a New Hampshire businessman and Reagan political operative, Max Hugel, as deputy director for operations (DDO).

This government job was once described by columnist Stewart Alsop with only slight exaggeration as "the most difficult and dangerous after the president's." The man in this position has the responsibility for directing all the agency's secret overseas operations from recruiting spies inside Russia, to secretly penetrating the international terrorist networks, to conducting covert political activities. Allen Dulles, Richard Helms and William Colby all held this job before subsequently becoming CIA directors but they earned their promotion by many years in intelligence assignments.

The DDO's most formidable opponent and main competitor on the world stage is the head of the KGB's First Chief Directorate, who controls in Russian embassies a corps of KGB professional officers four times the size of the CIA's overseas presence.

Incredible to KGB

The KGB chiefs in Moscow will find it incredible that the Americans should entrust the DDO responsibility to someone with virtually no previous experience, and they are undoubtedly searching their files for evidence of Mr. Hugel's role as a longtime undercover agent. They will find nothing of the sort.

It is no reflection on Hugel's business acumen in amassing a small fortune from the construction of a sewing machine company to point out that his only prior experience with intelligence was a brief stint at the end of World War II with military intelligence. As one Pentagon general commented, "The DDO office is no place for on-the-job training."

There is perhaps no position in the U.S. government where the accumulated memory of past successes and failures and deep familiarity with the individual strengths and weaknesses of hundreds of staff officers are so essential. The DDO has to be both leader and manager, and his ability to inspire confidence among his troops depends on his record of achievement in intelligence.

A Dicey Business

If President Reagan follows through on his intention to build up the covert political action and paramilitary resources of the CIA, this appointment is all the more surprising. As other presidents have learned, covert intervention in foreign countries can be a dicey business. The decision to intervene depends in the first instance on the DDO's judgment on whether the gains outweigh the risks.

In the only other case where a CIA director reached so far outside the ranks of the operations directorate, Allen Dulles selected a bright economist, Richard Bissell, to be DDO. Intellectually brilliant but lacking in operational experience, Bissell became the unfortunate architect of the Bay of Pigs.

In the staffs of the Senate and House intelligence committees and among friendly European intelligence services, there is concern that this appointment may further politicize the CIA. Hugel first came to Casey's attention during the presidential campaign as the result of his success in organizing ethnic groups behind Reagan's candidacy. Casey is convincing in his denial that the appointment is a political payoff, but the Democrats would find it hard to resist the temptation to replace Hugel with a political choice of their own the next time around. Step by step, the apolitical objectivity on which the agency used to pride itself is being undermined.

When confronted with these fears, Casey explains that after reviewing the qualifications of all senior operational officers he concluded that only Hugel had the required drive and ability. Casey may have been influenced by his experience in World War II when Wild Bill Donovan collected a group of talented amateurs to run U.S. intelligence.

But that was 40 years ago and the Soviets now present a more formidable challenge. Casey may yet prove to be right in choosing an able amateur for the agency's toughest job. But it's a breathtaking gamble for which the country will have to pay heavily if Casey has guessed wrong.

NEW YORK TIMES
15 MAY 1981

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-31

Guatemala, Salvador

By Stephen Schlesinger

A Republican President was in the White House. He had appointed as Secretary of State and chief delegate to the United Nations two sternly anti-Soviet strategists, and had chosen a veteran intelligence officer to head the Central Intelligence Agency. He had warned the public of the possibility of a "Communist outpost" in a small Central American country that had just received a shipment of Communist arms. The State Department, contending that the people of that country were living under a "reign of terror," issued a white paper documenting Communist "infiltration." Our United Nations representative had warned the Soviet Union against "meddling" in Central America, saying: "Stay out of this hemisphere. Don't try to start your plans and conspiracies here." The C.I.A. chief had privately informed his colleagues that the United States, intending to put down subversion in the region, would not wait.

All of this had not occurred by April 1981 but by June 18, 1954.

The President was Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Secretary of State was John Foster Dulles, the C.I.A. director was Allen Dulles, the chief representative at the United Nations was Henry Cabot Lodge. The country about which they spoke was not El Salvador but Guatemala.

In the Senate in the month preceding June 18 (the Republicans were in control), several influential conservatives had risen and demanded that the United States take action forthwith. The press, previously "unaware" of Guatemala's existence, had rushed dozens of correspondents there to investigate, among other things, the controversial agrarian-reform program. The United States public had begun to show agitation over a possible Communist "victory."

Mr. Eisenhower had dismissed our Ambassador to Guatemala — he had been chosen by the Truman Administration — as too "moderate," and replaced him with a tough anti-Communist. He had sent large quantities of military aid to Honduras, next door to the "besieged" nation. Invoking the Monroe Doctrine, he had also instituted a "stop-and-search" policy off the Guatemalan coast to intercept any further arms deliveries from overseas. Our Western European allies had quietly criticized the United States for overreacting to events in the region.

There were an isolated few within the Administration who had dissented from President Eisenhower's policy. They had argued for a political rather than a military settlement in Guatemala. But the President was more concerned about "rolling back Communism" in our sphere of influence in order to signal the Soviet Union that we would oppose Soviet expansionism all over the world. The President bluntly told the C.I.A. and State Department: "I want all of you to be damned good and sure you succeed. When you commit the flag, you commit it to win."

Within several weeks of Mr. Eisenhower's admonition — on June 18 — the United States deposed Guatemala's reformist President, Col. Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, who had been freely elected and had introduced New Deal-type changes. In his place, we put in a handpicked successor, Col. Carlos Castillo Armas. Now, 27 years later, Guatemala still has not returned to true democratic rule. Instead, it has gone through rigged elections, military coups, right-wing terror squads, and an undeclared civil war. More than 35,000 lives have been lost in the last 15 years. Its economy, once robust, has never recovered its equilibrium despite United States aid.

The similarities between El Salvador and Guatemala are too ominous to be ignored.

It is true that the United States opposed the Guatemalan Government's land-reform program and concealed its military operations against President Arbenz, while today it favors the central Government and agrarian policies of El Salvador and has publicized its military commitments there.

But we can conclude that when Washington insists on imposing its own ideological solution on a situation of complex domestic strife in another country, it resolves nothing. On the premise that it is defending the "free world" against "Communist totalitarianism," it may temporarily subdue a rebellion, but as long as economic conditions remain abysmal for a majority of the people, the United States will never eradicate the insurgency. That is the lesson Guatemala teaches. Unfortunately, the United States has shown little understanding of that experience in its continued opposition to a political settlement in El Salvador. That country can only find lasting peace when the the United States acts as a negotiator, not a marshal, and concentrates on economic not military solutions.

The United States must, at all costs, avoid the no-win, ruinous Guatemalan "solution" that guarantees no permanent stability and leads only to bloody and endless social turmoil.

Stephen Schlesinger is co-author of the forthcoming book "Bitter Fruit," about the United States-sponsored coup in Guatemala in 1954.